REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

In complete response to the outstanding Official Action of March 19, 2004, on the above-identified application, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1- 18 and 21- 26 are pending in the application.

Claims 19 and 20 are cancelled.

Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 18 and 21 stand rejected.

Claims 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 22-26 stand objected to.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 18 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 1 03(a) as being unpatentable over Boroson et al. (U.S. Patent 6,226,890) in view of Shigeta et al. (U.S. Patent 5,078,909).

The Examiner notes that:

> "Boroson discloses a method of predicting moisture absorption rate in PEM materials, the method comprising the steps of: drying a PEM (abstract) hygroscopic material for a time sufficient to remove residual moisture (Col. 3-4, Lines 49-8); weighing said hygroscopic material (Col. 4, Lines 9-33); placing said hygroscopic material within a substantially air tight chamber having a controllable atmosphere (Col. 4, Lines 9-33); exposing the hygroscopic material to an environment of known controlled relative humidity......"

The Examiner further notes that:

> "Shigeta discloses a constant a is a variable that is directly proportional to the relative humidity in an inert gaseous atmosphere (Col. 1, Lines 6-11); and modifying the variable a and holding the variable b constant to generate an expected moisture absorption mass gain versus time curve for a different specific relative humidity value........"

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The Examiner further notes that:

> "It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Boroson to have a constant a is a variable that is directly proportional to the relative humidity .... and using a curve fitting technique to fit the data to a curve using the equation $Y = AX^b$ taught by Shigeta in order to have the moisture calculation absorbent material to protect precision instrument......."

Applicants respectfully contend that the present invention is not unpatentable over Boroson et al. (U.S. Patent 6,226,890) in view of Shigeta et al. (U.S. Patent 5,078,909).

Boroson (U.S. Patent 6,226,890) discloses a **method of desiccating** an environment surrounding a moisture-sensitive electronic device. (col. 3, lines 49-52). The method discloses selecting a desiccant and a binder, then forming the combination onto a surface of an enclosure in which an electronic device is sealed (col. 4, lines 9-33).

Boroson further discloses **testing the performance** of various desiccants by **measuring the initial physical and electrical width of a cathode of an electronic test specimen**, exposing the specimen to a single level of humidity for a period of time, then measuring the final physical and electrical width of the cathode of the electronic test specimen (col. 8, line 62 to col. 9, line 20). The difference between the measurements is tabulated to show the performance of the various desiccants (col. 9, lines 25-32). Boroson **does not disclose weighing any specimens** or determining the quantity of moisture adsorbed by the desiccants.

Shigeta et al. (U.S. Patent 5,078,909) teaches conducting tests at various humidity levels to determine moisture absorption (col. 7, lines 26-33).

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In contrast, the present invention claims a method and apparatus for **estimating the moisture adsorption** by hygroscopic materials at various humidity conditions (page 7, paragraph 0034). The **mass increase of the hygroscopic material is measured** to determine the amount of moisture adsorbed at various humidity levels, and an equation is developed to predict the amount of moisture that will be adsorbed by the tested materials at various humidity levels (pages 7-8, paragraph 0035).

Because Boroson does not disclose measuring or predicting the mass of moisture absorbed by the desiccant, Shigeta cannot teach one skilled in the art how to use Boroson to practice the claimed invention.

Hence, one of ordinary skill in the art would not find that Boroson et al. (U.S. Patent 6,226,890) in view of Shigeta et al. (U.S. Patent 5,078,909) either teaches or suggests, to one skilled in the art, the present invention as claimed in Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 18, and 21.
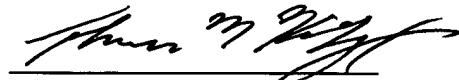
Claim Objections

Claims 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, and 22-26 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but are allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitation of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The above arguments render the base claims allowable and thus the objections to claims 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, and 22-26 are moot.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is believed that the present application now stands in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. Should the examiner believe a telephone call would expedite the prosecution of the application, he is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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